

by pacing individual birds with a motor ear along country roads. An opportunity of getting an estimate of the speed of the Common Bronzewing (*Phaps chalcoptera*) was provided me in November, 1945, near Lake Grace. Our ear flushed two Bronzewings from the ground, to the right of the road. They both overtook us, though one rose before the other, and flew at first parallel with the ear. They then quickly swung across the road in front of the ear and disappeared into the bush. Our ear was doing 40 miles per hour.

—D. L. SERVENTY, Nedlands.

**Spinebill Honeyeaters and *Dryandra nivea*.**—In *The Emu*, vol. 27, 1928, p. 185, there is an interesting paper by O. H. Sargent entitled "Reactions Between Birds and Plants", in which he stresses the part played by birds in the pollination of many species of native flora. He infers that *Banksia* and related species are primarily bird-pollinated. Of the cup-like blossoms of *Dryandra nivea* he remarks: "The style-tips are directed inwards round the rim of the 'cup', so that a bird seeking the nectar (nauseously heavy-odoured), which pours from the blossoms on to the bottom of the 'cup', must needs rub every style-tip. Excellent as its pollination mechanism undoubtedly is, *Dryandra nivea* is a very 'shy' seeder. The reason why is quite unknown to the author . . ."

As no particular bird-pollinators are mentioned by Mr. Sargent for this plant, it may, therefore, be of interest to record that in the Coolup district where the plant is common I have frequently found the Western Spinebill (*Acanthorhynchus superciliosus*) feeding with its head immersed in its cup-like blossoms. In his paper Sargent enumerates the following species in which the Spinebill has been seen feeding: *Anigozanthus manglesii*, *Banksia spp.*, *Hardenbergia comptoniana*, fuchsia and "geranium".

—A. H. ROBINSON, Coolup.

**Bob-tail Bite.**—Some years ago while on a visit to the Narrogin district, I encountered a Bob-tail Lizard (*Trachysaurus rugosus*) and decided to take his photograph. My host, who was with me, secured the lizard in the approved manner, i.e., by seizing him behind the head with thumb and forefinger. I then made the mistake of taking the lizard from my friend in the same way, except that, for convenience I approached it from the head end instead of from the tail end. The Bob-tail promptly seized one of my disengaged fingers which came within range of his jaws and held on with remarkable tenacity. My friend, more concerned for my welfare than that of the unfortunate reptile, struck it several heavy blows with a stick, but finally had to lever its jaws apart in order to release me.

As the finger was somewhat lacerated, I took an early opportunity of bathing it with a solution of permanganate of potash. The bite was a little painful at first as the flesh had been torn at the base of the finger nail, but there were no complications.

No doubt lizard bites if neglected could cause more or less

serious trouble, but in this respect they are no different from other non-venomous bites. The fact is, I fancy, that ill effects caused by bites and stings are too greatly feared. I have had a fairly wide experience, both as a victim and as a "first aider," of various stings and bites, including those of species of centipedes, scorpions and spiders, and have been reassured by the consequences.

—E. H. SEDGWICK, Caron.

**The White-winged Black Tern near Broome.**—The White-winged Black Tern (*Chlidonias leucoptera*) is a species which nests on the lakes and swamps of southern Europe, Algeria and central Asia, and wanders both north and south in the non-breeding season, sometimes reaching Australia. However, apart from a few records from the Northern Territory and Cape York, the only known certain instances of its appearance in the south occurred in 1917 and 1918. In the former year there was a remarkable invasion of thousands of these terns into the South-West. They were first reported from Doodlakine in the middle of March and the birds reached the west coast on Easter Sunday, April 8 along a broad front which extended in the north at least to Wedge Island and south to Busselton. A full and interesting account of the visitation was published in *The Emu*, vol. 17, 1917, p. 95, by Mr. W. B. Alexander. He stated that almost every swamp and estuary between Moora and Balingup seemed to have parties of the birds feeding over them. They were also seen at Garden Island. Lesser numbers of the terns were reported near Perth the following year (*The Emu*, vol. 18, 1918, p. 134).

There have been no reports of the species in Western Australia—or for that matter with any certainty elsewhere in the Commonwealth—ever since. So it is interesting to report that a specimen was collected by Mr. E. A. Akerstrom 20 miles S.W. of Broome on October 21, 1945. This was during a fisheries investigation in the area by Mr. G. P. Whitley in the lugger "Isobel." Mr. Whitley preserved the specimen in alcohol and kindly handed it over to me for examination. The bird was one of a large flock working over several shoals of tuna (*Kishinoella tonggol*).

The specimen was an immature female. The head was black, with the feathers narrowly tipped white, the forehead was broadly white, and there was a small black spot at the inner side of the orbit. Behind the head was a narrow white nuchal ring. The rest of the upper-parts were grey, with a brown tinge on some of the humeral feathers. The tail was light grey, whitish at the base and with the outer vane of the outermost quill white. All the underparts, including the under-wing coverts, were pure white with the underneath of the flight quills light grey. Measurements: Wing, 203 mm.; culmen, 22.0; tarsus, 21; middle toe and claw, 24. The specimen matches very well a young female collected near Monger's Lake during the 1917 visitation and preserved at the W.A. Museum.

—D. L. SERVENTY, Nedlands.